

Beauty Doesn't Always Make Good on Screen

The Viewpoints of Five Famous Cameramen

By ROY F. OVERBAUGH,

Cameraman, who recently filmed Billy Burke.

"WHY is it that so many really beautiful women do not make good on the screen—why they do not appear half as beautiful as they are in the flesh and blood?" This question, with variations, is asked me almost daily. And people seem surprised because I cannot answer the question in a single sentence. I might say, in all truth, "color and contour," which is largely the reason, but the two words do not express much to the layman. First we consider beauty. What is it according to our standards? I would enumerate them as coloring, expression, animation, proportion, eyes and contour.

One of the most important of these is coloring, when it comes to a matter of screening well or poorly. Coloring is not reproduced on the screens and color values or relations never come out truthfully on the screen. On the other hand, contour is always faithfully reproduced. If a woman be of beautiful contour, the lines will show.

We hear, over and over, that ancient bromide, "The camera never lies." It's all wrong. The camera is a fearful liar in many things, especially in recording the relative value of colors as seen in life by the human eye. A person with only fair features but beautiful complexion, clear blue eyes and auburn hair might be considered to possess beauty, but on being photographed the resulting picture would show a rather muddy complexion, black hair and very pale, washed-out appearing eyes. Make-up, of course, is the usual method to make the skin appear smooth on the screen but this smoothness does not compare to the beauty of a pink and white complexion as seen by the eye. Auburn hair can be made to appear blond by keeping an abnormal amount of light on it, but there are times in an interior set for motion picture work that this would be bad technique, as apparently there is no logical source for such extreme overhead illumination. The still portrait photographer can work wonders by retouching, but in cinematography make-up of the artist's face has to accomplish the same purpose. For every person there is always some particular lighting which portrays him or her to the best advantage.

It occasionally happens that improper lighting facilities make impossible good photography.

Finally, in determining whether a person will screen well, analyze that person's beauty. If it consists of beauty of contour and feature, and the eyes are not too light in color, they are, from a photographic standpoint at least, screen possibilities.

Note—I have in mind a girl of good features, who has jet black hair, which she wears brushed straight back from her forehead. She has black eyes, and insists on using a very light make-up, and seems partial to white waists. This presents such a contrast that it is almost impossible to do justice to her photographically. Yet she is considered beautiful. The camera does not record extreme contrasts well.

By F. M. DEAN,

Cameraman, who recently filmed Lionel Barrymore.

To be very conservative I will say that at least half of the very pretty girls are handicapped at the start in the matter of becoming successful screen stars because they are so beautiful!

It reads like a paradox, I know, but the facts are these, the beautiful girls know that they are beautiful. They would be stupid if they did not know it. But, knowing this, they are self-conscious. They do not

want to be, but once in front of the camera they lose their naturalness, they seem to be thinking to themselves, "I am very beautiful, I shall look very beautiful in pictures. I am being photographed because I am beautiful!" They may deny this but I know that something like this runs through the mind of at least half such girls. The result is that they are self-conscious, and being so they lose those natural graces and airs, those natural charms that really go half way to make them beautiful and they do not screen well at all.

Then again it may be the cameraman's fault. Some cameramen are actually so overwhelmed by the beauty of the subject that they do not do their best work. Laugh if you will, but it is true. We all get that way sometimes.

A pretty girl often doesn't have any brains and can get by on the stage or street, but the camera will reveal much that the eye does not see in the girl herself, and she won't look her best in the movies. Take the best stars in the business—the lasting ones—and you'll discover they have that rare combination of beauty and brains.

You never saw a photograph of an intelligent man or woman but what had something attractive about it, no matter if the person's facial charms were nil. It may be the expression of the eyes, the pose of the head, the brow, but it is always there—something attractive in the photograph of an intelligent person. Add to this physical beauty and you have a star!

THIS symposium by five of the leading cameramen explains many interesting features in connection with photoplay photography that will be news to most of the present day moving picture theater patrons.

By JOHN S. STUMAR,

Cameraman, now filming Dorothy Dalton.

A beautiful girl may have a small narrow face. But she will not always photograph as beautiful. This is because a round face photographs better than a lean one, since more can be done then with light effects. A full face picks up lights better; there are more possibilities of working different shades into a full face, and good camera work has come to depend to a marked degree on lights and shadows.

A girl with high cheek bones may be beautiful on the stage or street, but she will not photograph so if the proper light is not played on her.

A girl who is beautiful on the stage or street may not photograph so because she doesn't know the art of make-up. It has taken celebrated screen beauties production after production, often as long as a year and a half, to learn the proper combination of colors to use in order to get the best results for the screen. That is why some celebrated stage beauties did not appear at their best in one or two productions for the screen. They did not know in what make-up they would photograph best, and it would take a lot of experimenting with lights and colors to determine this. They should not give up in despair but try many times. Often, on the other hand, it is possible through the proper make-up for a girl who is declared beautiful because of her coloring, chiefly, but who possesses defects of features, to offset these by make-up. It is admitted that she may be considered beautiful in spite of imperfect features and because of coloring.

By WILLIAM A. REINHART,

One of the cameramen filming "Anne of Green Gables."

The lines that age brings to woman, those first traces of the breaking of the tissues in the neck, the crow's-feet, the nose-to-mouth-corner lines, are easily and cleverly camouflaged for the afternoon tea, the opera, or even the afternoon sunlight, but the camera is relentless. These lines cannot be hidden unless make-up is plastered on as a mason uses mortar, and when that is done all expression is gone.

The result is that many women, still apparently in the bloom of youth and beauty, who strike us as ravishing beauties when we meet them face to face, and whom we would wager any sum would make a hit in photoplays, actually look terrible when screened. The camera digs under that illusion of fresh young womanhood which cosmetics may give and it reveals age like a birth certificate.

Close scrutiny may be given her features and though make-up can conceal fine lines, those deeper ones that come with age remain. The camera is very penetrating.

By GEORGE BENOIT,

Cameraman for Elsie Ferguson.

Whether or not a girl will appear beautiful on the screen is, after all is said and done, still a secret of the lens, and no cameraman can put his fingers, absolutely, on the reason. No one can look at a girl and

say whether or not she will photograph beautifully and it is only after she has had numerous experiences before the camera that one can decide—allowing for the fact that she may use the wrong make-up at first and later learn what is right for her. I want to emphasize the personality of the woman above mere beauty of features. In my opinion a beautiful woman will not photograph as beautiful if her mind is not in sympathy with her part. If a beautiful woman with a pure mind tries to play a bad woman—irrespective of her ability as an actress—she will not photograph as beautifully as she would if impersonating a good woman, a part with which she has sympathy. And vice versa. A woman with a bad mind can not maintain her impression of beauty in a good rôle because she will be out of sympathy with it, no matter how clever an actress she is.

Many women have so much charm in their manner of talking that people believe them beautiful. But on the screen this charm, naturally, is lost, and the subject does not register beautiful.

Clothes have so important a part that a beautiful woman who wears the wrong kind of clothes may get by on the stage, but not on the screen. A woman must wear correct lines to get the best results with the camera. Miss Ferguson is an example of how this is well done.

Eyes play an important part on the screen that cannot be over-emphasized and the woman who has perfect features, but eyes that are small and insignificant, may not always photograph as a beauty. Vice versa, a woman with features not so good but with large, expressive eyes that indicate a mind behind them, will photograph beautifully. The eyes are of first importance, eyes that indicate intelligence. The baby doll type of movie queen, brainless and insipid, cannot last.

To succeed on the screen a woman must have brains and if she has beauty and no brains she will not photograph as a beauty.

It is personality more than mere beauty of features.

The Enemy Within the Lines

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ization is new, wherever modern industries have only recently been introduced, and large numbers of rural population have been attracted to cities, the death-rates from phthisis have been rising."

Discussing the problem with a physician the writer asked whether there is a means of combating the disease effectively, conceding that results from the present methods are availing little.

"It appears to me, and I have given every waking hour for many, many years to this," answered this physician, "that we are simply traveling in a vicious circle, a circle no different in effect from that which exists in the high-cost-of-living situation, in that we have increased wages bringing higher costs, and higher costs bringing new additions to the wage-rates. In the treatment of tuberculosis we have run slam-bang against the economic system that prevails. Except in the small percentage of cases wherein those afflicted are so wealthy that all commands can be carried out without handicap, we find that conditions are such that treatment, that is adequate treatment, and the provision of a suitable economic environment oftentimes are impossible, and that when it is possible over a limited period of time, that the person so treated, cured, or practically so, is compelled to return to the same environment, home and industrial, that brought about the previous condition. It's a bread-and-butter problem, fundamentally."

"For instance, let me illustrate, and the illustration is typical of the condition that is met in the treatment of more than ninety-nine per cent of the cases of tuberculosis that do come under diagnosis. A man,

the head of a family, has contracted tuberculosis. Fortunately, it is diagnosed as such. He is a worker, either hand or brain. His wage has not permitted him to enjoy proper living conditions. He is a product of the city. His is a continual fight to keep poverty from the door. It is necessary that he work, day in and day out, that the mouths dependent upon him are fed. And what he is able to procure for them, and himself, does not provide the resistance that the body should have to ward off such a disease.

"In the event that he is persuaded that sanitarium treatment is the only means of saving his life, he is carted off to the particular sanitarium provided for such cases. There is no provision for the family. It may be that temporary arrangements are made for that family; it may be that after a fashion they are taken care of. So, during the months necessary to bring the healing of those lesions that are shortening his life, and, incidentally, the lives of those dependent on him, all that possibly can be done for such a case is done for him, at the expense of the state, or the municipality, or the institution, if such, responsible for the existence of the sanitarium. The lesions are healed over, in the course of a year, and he is discharged, practically a well man yet in need of the same food that has been given him all these months; in need, too, of a different, a healthful environment; an environment that will prevent the return of tuberculosis."

"But, under the present system, what is that man going to do? What can he do? At his age he cannot reshape his life; indeed, the urge to do so is not there. He does not understand. It is the most natural thing,

and it is the thing he does, as the available data will reveal, that he returns to that work for which he is fitted—that work and that environment which sent him to the sanitarium. That man, saved for the time, inevitably is lost as time goes on. There's something wrong in a system like that—it's too cruel a system to be permitted, it would seem to me."

What's the answer?

One man says proper housing conditions, proper working conditions, sickness and old-age insurance—in fact, a new deal.

One hundred and fifty thousand die a year. The loss in lives cannot adequately be put in dollars and cents, but one authority holds each one of those one hundred and fifty thousand deaths to be a loss to the nation each year of five thousand dollars, without counting in the cost of treatment and care for each of the one hundred and fifty thousand. Also, it should be remembered that the majority are carried off in the most productive period of their lives.

Seven hundred and fifty millions of dollars lost each year through the mortality in tuberculosis! Those are the figures given by the United States Public Health Service. And for each of those who die, there are three who have been diagnosed as tuberculous and are receiving treatment as such. And there are at least twice as many more whose cases have not been diagnosed, who are tuberculous, and whose earning capacity and whose value to the nation are reduced by the insidious growth of the disease that has trapped them.

Not pleasant, but the truth, borne out by official facts and official figures.